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The Tower Mark. p. 5.

THE
TOWER MARK



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THE
TOWER MARK.

“Look, Ellen,” said Rose Vernon to her sister, as they sat at dinner with their father, mother, and uncle Gilbert, “here are the Tower marks on the spoons and forks that we are using.”

Rose and Ellen had, that morning, accompanied their parents to a silversmith's shop to make a purchase, as a present to a young relative about to commence housekeeping.

A great variety of splendid and useful articles were brought forward

for selection, from among which the purchasers seemed disposed to fix on a handsome tea service, observing, however, that the price somewhat exceeded the sum they had intended to devote.

The master of the shop then offered to their inspection a modern article, extremely elegant, much in request, and which could be sold at a much lower price.

The articles produced were indeed brilliant, tasteful, and well executed, and excited the admiration of all the party, especially of the young ladies, who declared them even superior to those bearing the higher price.

“Yes,” said Mr. Vernon, pushing aside the goods last exhibited, “they are very beautiful; this kind of

ware is brought to great perfection, but *it wants the Tower mark.*"

Ellen and Rose wished to know what particular mark it was on which their father laid so great a stress.

Taking up the articles which were first selected, and which he decided on purchasing, Mr. Vernon showed his daughter, on the under part of each article, several small stamps—one of a lion, one of a crown, another of certain letters, and so on.

"Well, father," said Ellen, "you have, no doubt, a good reason for liking these marks; but I really do not see any great beauty in them."

"And," added Rose, "if they were ever so beautiful, they are placed so out of sight that no one who did not

know they were there, would think of looking for them."

"True, miss," interposed the silversmith, "but persons who know the meaning of these marks will never omit to look for them in the goods they purchase. To give you some idea of their importance: the goods in this window, all of which bear the Tower mark, exceed in their intrinsic value, by more than a thousand pounds, that of an equal quantity of the goods you just now so much admired, which do not bear the Tower mark."

"Do you mean to say, sir," asked Ellen, "that the mark really adds to the value of the things?"

"The mere addition of the mark certainly would not make *that* valuable which before was worthless.

But as it never is applied, except to articles of intrinsic value, it serves to attest the value of the article on which it is found. Every piece of gold and silver plate is required by law to be tested by duly authorized persons. If, on examination, it should be found that an article presented is, in any degree, below the standard of purity, that article is immediately destroyed, or rendered valueless, except as old metal. But if it is approved, these marks are affixed to attest its purity and value; and there they stand as a permanent memorial that the law has been complied with, and that the article is standard gold or silver, as it purports to be. These marks were formerly stamped at the Mint office. in the Tower of London.

Hence the name 'Tower marks' But the Mint is now removed from the Tower, and such plate is marked at the 'Goldsmith's Hall,' in London, Edinburgh, Dublin, Sheffield and Birmingham. They are now more properly called 'Hall marks.'

"Oh, then, these very beautiful things that have not the mark are not really silver?"

"No, miss, they are plated."

While this conversation passed, Mr. Vernon had been preparing the money for the goods, which he put into the hands of the silversmith, and the family pursued their walk.

At dinner time some articles on the table recalled to the minds of the young people what had passed in the silversmith's shop.

Rose observed the marks on the

spoons and forks, and Ellen the same on the butter-knife, and cruet-stand.

"Certainly," said Mrs. Vernon, "you will not find any thing of that complexion here without those marks. There may be a degree of prejudice in the feeling; but I have a peculiar dislike to plated things, however elegant; though I have no objection to using china, glass, ivory, wood, or whatever other material of an unassuming character is adapted to the purpose.

Mr. V. We are quite agreed on that matter. The most homely articles that really are what they appear to be, are, in my esteem, far preferable to the most specious and successful imitations of something superior. I should not like

any one to be deceived by supposing our things to be more valuable than they are; still less, if we should incur the suspicion of a wish to deceive. I hope we shall never affect display of any kind that does not bear the "Tower mark" of real value. And we must not forget that there are other matters, besides silver goods and plated, in which we are liable to mistake or deception. Many things are not what they appear to be.

Ellen. The sham, near H——, for instance.

Mr. G. What is that, Ellen?

Ellen. Why, uncle, the inn at H——, where we stayed on our way from Wales, fronts the river. and commands an extensive prospect beyond it. On the brow of a high

hill, and in front of a thick wood, there was a beautiful alcove—a sort of Grecian temple—which we very much admired, and wished to examine more closely. As it did not appear very far distant, father kindly offered to walk with us, though he feared that the walk, short as it seemed, might be found more fatiguing than we anticipated. However, we were disposed to try. The morning was intensely hot, and the hill very steep. But we beguiled the way by thinking that it could not be much farther, and that, when we reached the spot, we could rest in the alcove, and refresh ourselves with some fruit that mother had kindly given us. So we toiled on: but when we were within a few yards of our object we found an im-

passable fence between ourselves and it, which, being painted dark green, could not, at a distance, be distinguished from the wood. Still we did not like to be baffled; and thinking that the access to the temple must be through the wood, we went partly round it; and though we could find no regular path we scrambled through briars and nettles, and at last reached our object. But what do you think, uncle? Our beautiful Grecian temple was nothing more than painted boards. Was it not too bad?

Mr. G. I think it was not exactly in good taste. However, the fatigue and disappointment were not altogether lost, since they were brought to your recollection when your father said that things are not always

what they seem to be. I wish you may never suffer yourselves to be deceived in matters of greater moment.

Rose. I wish, uncle, there could be a Tower mark set on every thing that we are likely to value or desire; and then, you know, when it had once been explained to us, we could not be deceived.

Mr. G. I am not quite sure of that, Rose.

Rose. Why, uncle, now I know about the Tower mark, if I went to a shop to buy a silver tea-pot, and they offered to sell me a plated one, I should directly say, "This will not do; it has not the Tower mark."

Ellen. And suppose the gentleman who put up that sham temple,

had been obliged to paint upon it, "SHAM," in letters large enough to be seen from the inn; we should not then have taken that hot fatiguing walk, to be, after all, disappointed.

Mr. G. And yet I am apt to believe that people, with quite as much knowledge and experience as my dear nieces, are deceived in their estimate of things, the real character and value of which are nevertheless stamped upon them as visibly and authoritatively as the Tower mark on plate. I know a gentleman—your father knows him too—who has been, for many years, toiling and scheming to acquire a large fortune, to be the richest man of his family, and almost the richest man in the county. He has attained

his object, but he finds it wants the Tower mark.

Rose. How do you mean, uncle?

Mr. G. I mean that his great riches no more yield him the satisfaction he expected from them than the sham alcove afforded you shelter, repose and gratification; that the treasure he has obtained as much disappoints his expectations as the purchase of merely plated articles would disappoint the expectation of one who had paid the price of solid silver for them. And in all this he has deceived *himself*; for, while eagerly grasping at riches, and selfishly hoarding them, he has been familiar with the infallible testimony that has stamped upon them, "Vanity and vexation of spirit." He knew that he was spending

“money for that which is not bread, and labour for that which satisfieth not;” walking “in a vain show,” and disquieting himself in vain setting his eyes “upon that which is not.”*

Ellen. I wonder how people can suppose that riches will make them happy.

Mr. G. The desire of riches is not one of the most common mistakes of the young. It more frequently grows upon persons as they advance in years. But though young people do not often desire money for the sake of hoarding it, they are apt to desire expensive gratifications—such as dress, ornaments, pleasure-taking,—which is but the same mistake

* *Ecc.* xii. 8; *Isa.* lv. 2; *Ps.* xxxix. 6; *Prov.* xiii. 5.

in another form ; and, when the object is gained, it is found just as unsatisfactory. There is no Tower mark of satisfaction on any of these things. "The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing."

I remember two young ladies, sisters, who were much admired for personal beauty and polite accomplishments ; their hearts were set on gayety, fashion and display. It seemed to be the business of their lives to adorn their persons and to seek amusements. But so far from being contented and happy, they were restless, peevish and envious. One of them lost her beauty by the small-pox ; the other married unhappily ; and both found that the objects of their youthful pursuit

were, in themselves, unsatisfying and short-lived, and left them without resources for meeting the trials and vexations of life. They were truly pitiable persons.

Mr. Vernon having been called out to speak to a person on business, observed on his return, that he had just seen one whose character was an illustration of the too common mistake of adopting the showy for the solid. This young man, said he, fancies himself a genius. He has been flattered by partial friends on his superior abilities and attainments. His confidence in what he *can* do, has led him to despise industry and perseverance as virtues belonging to humble mediocrity; and he *does* nothing. He disregards and violates the common proprieties

and obligations of social life. He is irregular, extravagant and reckless, justifying his faults as marks of superiority. Ah! *the* mark is wanting in him. There may be brilliance, but there is no solidity—no sterling excellence; and time will prove that “nothing can supply the want of prudence and virtue; and that negligence and irregularity, long continued, will make knowledge useless, wit ridiculous and genius contemptible.”

Mr. G. Such instances are not uncommon. Indeed, I think, of all the various mistakes to which we are exposed, those that relate to human character and conduct, (especially our own,) are the most common. There is a great danger of mistaking the semblance of vir-

tue for its reality, and hence arises much of human instability.

Mrs. V. I was thinking just now, that professions of ardent, inviolable friendship are often much more specious than solid. Many such have we seen, which scarcely survived a few months' separation; and some in which one party, being somewhat elevated in life, has been ashamed to acknowledge the friend of youth, whose circumstances had been less advantageous. Very base must be the metal of which *such* friendships are formed! You remember Lavinia M. and her friend, Ann P.?

Mr. G. Yes, I do. My mind reverted to them while you spoke. The character of the blamable person in that matter was altogether

one of display. Its superficial brightness soon wore off; while in that of her forsaken friend, the trials of life only served to bring out its sterling excellences, and to purify and polish it "as gold tried in the fire." These dear girls do not know the parties to whom we refer, or it would be objectionable thus to speak of them; but, as it is, we do but afford our young friends an opportunity of considering themselves in the mirror of human nature.

Mr. V. How sadly, in some instances, the gentler virtues are simulated. There are ladies of very fascinating manners—in company all gentleness, softness, politeness sensibility;—but a peep behind the scenes would lead to more than a suspicion that all these amiable

qualities want the Tower mark of genuineness. The very same ladies have been known to scold at a servant, to treat a poor person with scorn and haughtiness, and to disavow their relationship with persons, in every respect but fortune and fashion, incomparably their superiors. Justly has it been observed, "If you would know a person with whom you have not lived, mark how he speaks to those whom he deems his inferiors."

And, liberality—how much passes for that which does not deserve the name! I know a man who, from superficial observers, often gains credit for generosity and nobleness, but whose real character is one of meanness and selfishness. His name stands on subscription lists, and he

loves to see it there; nor can he bear to refuse to purchase an expensive picture or book, if urged to do so, or to give lavishly to an importunate beggar; but the means of doing these things are derived, not from any sort of self-denial, but from a neglect of the claims of justice. His just debts are unpaid!

Mr. G. After all, it is a satisfaction to know that there is such a thing as reality in virtue—ay, and in piety too—though what is assumed as such is too often no more than a specious resemblance. It would be easy to select two young professors of religion, alike zealous in attending public ordinances—fellow-teachers in a Sunday-school—reading the same books—meeting on the same benevolent and pious

objects—marked by a general similarity of pursuits—yet characterized by such a different manner of doing the same things, that, in the one case no candid observer can overlook “the Tower mark,” while, in the other, no thoughtful observer can fail to ask, “Is it there?”

Ellen. Oh! uncle, you make me tremble. Do tell me what you mean by the Tower mark, as applied to character.

Rose. And how we can know whether or not things be really worth seeking.

A short pause ensued; after which the following remarks by the seniors of the party, in answer to the questions of the younger ones, closed the conversation.

As to the objects of our pursuit: the marks required are fitness and sufficiency. *Fitness.* What end do you desire and expect them to answer? And are they really adapted to that end? Some things entirely fail of this, and are utterly unfit. *Sufficiency.* All worldly things are insufficient, except as they are subordinate and subservient to something better. The only way to avoid disappointment, and really to enjoy the good of this life, is to "seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," and receive all other things as "added thereunto."*

Then as to the character of others: and this may be useful as guarding us in the choice of our friends and connexions. We have no right to

* Matt. vi. 33.

expect perfection; we do not possess it ourselves. Even sterling metals are not without alloy. But we may and ought to look for *consistency*; nor are we warranted in placing confidence, or fixing attachment, where that indispensable "Tower mark" is wanting.

As to our own actions and characters. In the sight of God motives constitute the value of actions, and we are *really* what we are in his sight. Perhaps we shall not err in saying, that "the Tower marks" of sincerity are habitual *self-denial* and *humility*. Self is the idol of the natural man; but, in conversion, self is dethroned, and Christ exalted. The "one thing needful" is union with Christ, and a life of communion with him; and the daily business

of that life is to deny one's self, take up the cross, and follow Christ."*

There is a sacred mark which at once denotes the security of the Christian as the property of God, and the unequivocal distinction of character which is essential to satisfy himself and others that he really is what he professes to be. It is stamped by the broad seal of heaven, and bears two mottos, "The Lord knoweth them that are his;" and, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."†

"If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God."‡ "The Spirit itself beareth

Isa. ii. 17, 18; Matt. xvi. 24. † 2 Tim ii. 19.

‡ 1 John iii. 20, 21.

witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”*

Temptation, adversity, death, will try both our professions and our character, as the storm tries the building;† or as the refiner’s fire tries the metal.‡ These trials will show the intrinsic value of what is genuine, and the utter worthlessness of what is assumed. Happy are they who possess the only satisfying and abiding portion—an interest in Christ; and who can say, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.”§

The late venerable Thomas Scott,

* Rom. viii. 16.

† Matt. vii. 24—27.

‡ Ps. lxvi. 10; Isa. i. 25; Jer. vi. 30; Mal. iii. 2,

1 Pet. i. 7.

§ 2 Tim. i. 12.

once employed "the Tower mark" on silver, as an illustration of the sentiment he was endeavouring to press on a class of students in theology. He urged them to bring every thing in religion to the Bible, as to a touchstone or standard, and to adopt no system of doctrine, no style of preaching, no class of motives, no line of conduct, no source of satisfaction, that was not in strict accordance with the scope and spirit of that sacred book. "Submit," said he, "every thing to the test. Let all be conformed to the analogy of Scripture. For example:—There are some truths mentioned in the Bible, about which we find here and there a verse. There are others—such as relate to the person, character, and work of our Saviour; the

true state and condition of man, repentance; faith; holiness;—these we meet in almost every page, and sometimes find whole chapters occupied on them. Now, the system that dwells most upon these topics on which the Bible says little, and passes over, or slightly alludes to, those to which the Bible gives the greatest prominence,—this system, however specious, is spurious; it wants ‘the Tower mark.’ So, if zeal for forms destroys love to the brethren; if rites and ceremonies be substituted for the power of religion on the heart; if doctrines be exalted at the expense of holiness of life; if assurance be built on occasional impressions, rather than on the word of Christ, and a prevailing oneness of spirit with him—there is some-

thing sadly defective—‘the Tower mark’ is not there.”

“The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.”*

* Ps xii. 6.



GOD THE JUDGE OF ALL.

THERE is an eye that marks the ways of men
With strict, impartial, analysing ken.
Our motley creeds, our crude opinions lie,
All, all unveiled to that all-seeing eye.
He sees the softest shades by error thrown;
Marks where His truth is left to shine alone;
Decides with most exact, unerring skill,
Wherein we differ from His word and will.
No specious names nor reasonings, to His view,
The false can varnish or deform the true;
Nor vain excuses e'er avail to plead
The *right* of theory for the *wrong* of deed.
Before that unembarrassed just survey,
What heaps of refuse must be swept away!
How must its search from every creed remove
All but the golden grains of truth and love;
Yet with compassion for our feeble powers,
For oh! His thoughts and ways are not as ours

There is a day, in flaming terrors bright,
When truth and error shall be brought to light;

Who then shall rise, amid the glorious throng,
To boast that *he* was right and *you* were wrong;
When each rejoicing soul shall veil his face,
And none may triumph but in glorious grace?
No meaner praise shall heavenly tongues employ;
Yet *they* shall reap the more abundant joy
Who sought his truth with simple, humble aim,
To do his will and glorify his name

SINCERITY AND HYPOCRISY.

- 1 GOD is a spirit, just and wise;
 He sees our inmost mind;
In vain to heaven we raise our cries,
 And leave our souls behind.
- 2 Nothing but truth before his throne
 With honour can appear;
The painted hypocrites are known
 Through the disguise they wear.
- 3 Their lifted eyes salute the skies;
 Their bending knees the ground;

But God abhors the sacrifice
Where not the heart is found.

† Lord, search my thoughts, and try my ways;
And make my soul sincere;
Then shall I stand before thy face,
And find acceptance there.



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